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Preporod
11. July, 2022.

In Srebrenica, during the period from 1992 to 1995, 826 children were killed, and in just one week in July 1995 alone, 694 children were killed, stated Dr. Zilha Mastalić-Košuta from the Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law of the University of Sarajevo in an interview for Fena.

Numerous documents, data, statements, information, findings, as well as many verdicts against convicted war criminals before the ICTY and domestic courts testify to the crimes committed. The scale and methods of crimes against children in Srebrenica prove that the

aggressors had no sensitivity even toward the youngest and most protected category of the civilian population - said Mastalić-Košuta on the occasion of marking the 27th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica.

She explains that a crime against a child is simultaneously a crime against their family, and therefore against society as a whole, with far-reaching consequences that leave lasting changes in the community.

Mastalić-Košuta is the author of scientific works “Crimes Against Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina Using the Examples of Sarajevo, Mostar and Srebrenica (1992–1995)” and “Genocide Against Children in Srebrenica – UN Safe Zone, July 1995,” which, among other things, present numerous examples and a chronology of crimes committed against children in the UN “safe zone” in Srebrenica.

After the fall of Srebrenica, columns of people fled from all directions toward the main UNPROFOR base in Potočari, where between 20,000 and 25,000 refugees gathered, mostly women, children, the elderly, and those unfit for military service.

Among them were around thirty deaf and mute individuals, including children, most of whom were executed in the following days. Conditions were unbearable and chaotic—hungry and thirsty, panicked and terrified, without medicine or food, without sanitation facilities in the extreme July heat.

On July 12, members of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), with tanks, advanced toward Potočari. Together with Ratko Mladić, they entered Potočari, where the persecution of around 20,000 people

began in front of the Dutch Battalion base. Serbian military and police forces, including units from Serbia and the "Republic of Serbian Krajina," separated men aged 14 to 65 on July 12 and 13, and then summarily executed them at various locations around the UN base in Potočari.

In the following days, they also killed women, children, and the elderly. There are data indicating that girls aged 15 and older were also separated from the group in Potočari and taken to Bratunac for execution. Relevant sources also report rapes. Some women in the UN base, out of fear, were forced to abort their pregnancies.

Women who remained with their children later testified about horrific events in which children were taken from their mothers for execution or killed in their mothers' arms. The separation of mothers from their children was among the most difficult experiences.

After Mladić ordered, during a meeting with UNPROFOR, that a list be made of military-age men in Potočari, the Dutch Battalion registered 239 men and handed them over to the VRS, then ordered them to leave Potočari. These men never returned—they were taken away and killed by the VRS. Among them were also 26 children aged between 15 and 18, who were killed in the following days.

Special units of the Serbian Ministry of Interior, known as the "Scorpions," took a number of captured Bosniak civilians, including boys, to Jahorina and Trnovo, where they were abused, tortured, and killed. These killings were recorded on video and later broadcast

worldwide. A mother, Nura Alispahić, recognized her sixteen-year-old son Azmir in the footage.

On the list of genocide victims from the population of the UN “safe zone” of Srebrenica in July 1995, which names 8,372 individuals, there are also three-year-old Nesiba Alić, four-year-old Emina Vranjko, and five-year-old Edina Mujić. All of these girls were killed on July 11, 1995. The youngest victim was a newborn baby, Fatima Muhić. In the days that followed, according to a clearly established plan, people were captured and killed, including children. Most victims had their hands tied behind their backs with wire. Mass executions were carried out at multiple locations: Hajdučko Cemetery, Jadar, the Cerska Valley, Kamenica Hill, the warehouse in Kravica, Sandići, Tišća, Orahovac, Nova Kasaba, the dam near Petkovci, the Branjevo military farm, the Cultural Center in Pilica, Kozluk, and other locations.

The executions continued even after July 18. The commander of the Zvornik Brigade, war criminal Vinko Pandurević, ordered that prisoners not be brought in, but instead killed on the spot. During this period, the VRS intensified efforts to locate and kill Bosniaks, continuing on July 19 and 20. On July 23, 1995, by order of Ratko Mladić, military police also killed a number of wounded individuals from Srebrenica who were being treated in Zvornik.

The number of killings and the speed of executions demonstrate that a large number of organized and disciplined perpetrators participated in both the preparation and execution of the crimes—essentially the entire political, administrative, police, and military apparatus. Despite

all acts, resolutions, agreements, and conventions on the protection of children, numerous and severe crimes, including genocide, were committed against the children of Srebrenica between 1992 and 1995 - emphasizes Mastalić-Košuta.

She adds that 694 children were killed in Srebrenica in the span of a single week, which clearly speaks to the nature of the war and the intentions of the aggressors—to destroy a people, a state, and erase the traces of their existence. Forensic evidence shows the discovery of primary, secondary, and even tertiary mass graves in order to conceal the mass executions, clearly demonstrating the nature of these crimes.

In addition to physical killing and wounding, severe forms of harm also included psychological trauma, which, although less visible than physical injuries, leaves lasting and immeasurable consequences on the entire society of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Children experienced severe trauma: injuries, loss of parents and loved ones, starvation, lack of food and medicine, illness and death from cold and disease, separation from parents and loved ones, denial of normal education, interruption of childhood, deprivation of favorite activities, and more. Children were also subjected to sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Some children, through captivity, endured the most horrific forms of torture - states Mastalić-Košuta.

She notes that crimes against children in Srebrenica were committed before the eyes of the global public.

Although Srebrenica was declared a UN “safe zone,” crimes continued afterward with even greater intensity. A crime against children is also a crime against their parents, relatives, and friends—it is a crime of much broader scope and scale. By killing a child, a family, a society, and a state are destroyed. The consequences of these crimes are still visible today, and the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to struggle with them for a long time - concludes Zilha Mastalić-Košuta.

Source: https://preporod.info/bs/article/32921/u-srebrenici-od-1992-do-1995-godine-ubijeno-826-djece